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GERMAN LITERATURE.

Gellerts Lustspiele. Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Litteraturgeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts, von Dr. PHIL. WOLD. HAYNEL. Emden und Borkum, 1896. 8vo, viii+87 pp.

Gellerts Lustspiele. Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des deutschen Lustspiels, von JOHANNES COYM. Berlin, 1899. 8vo, viii+91. pp. (*Palæstra*: Untersuchungen und Texte aus der deutschen und englischen Philologie, herausgegeben von Alois Brandl und Erich Schmidt. ii.)

BOTH volumes are doctor dissertations treating of the technique and the language of Gellert's three comedies and his one *Nachspiel*, and establishing the origin of the characters contained in their casts.

One of Gellert's merits is to have introduced the *comédie larmoyante* in German literature, imitating in this the French development of the stage. Together with this French influence goes the adaptation to the German stage of a certain number of types of character, which can be also found in Holberg's and Frau Gottsched's plays, and whose origin can be traced back to both English and French sources, as contained in periodicals like the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, and their continental imitations, in La Bruyère's *Caractères*, and in comedies of Molière, Destouches, Nivelle de la Chaussée, and others. Haynel in his volume makes an attempt to enumerate those types which are predominant in *Gellerts Lustspiele*, and adds to them a list of some of the traditional plots, accidents, intrigues and denouements of that time. Both authors however merely carry out and complete the excellent indications given by Erich Schmidt in his sketch of Gellert's character and writings in the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*.

The examination of Gellert's technique and style follows closely Erich Schmidts statement's in a review published in the *Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Litteratur* ii, pp. 38-79. Its chief result is the proof of the fact that Gellert uses almost the same technique and language in his *Fabeln* and in his *Lustspiele*. The chapters on Gellert's language in both volumes, however, do not exhaust their subject.

As early as 1876, in the review just quoted, Erich Schmidt showed the urgent need of a history of style in German literature, and brilliantly indicated on what lines it should be written. But to the present day not much advance has been made in this matter, and it is more desirable than ever that a thorough investigation should be devoted to the development of German literary style, demonstrating on a psychological and grammatical basis the close connection of any habit of thought with its characteristic expression in the choice of style.¹

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UNIVERSITY EXTENSION IN DANISH.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES,

SIRS:—Ever since the introduction of the English system of University Extension into Denmark a few years ago Danish writers have, consciously or unconsciously, been experimenting with various methods of naming the movement. It is obvious that there are three main methods of nomenclature to choose from; the English word can be taken in unchanged, a Danish word may be used describing the system from a different point of view, or the English word may be literally translated into Danish.

The first method has been used so generally in connection with sporting terms that it has at least the virtue of precedent. Its use was noted in a letter from Oxford, published in a recent number of the *Berlingske Tidende*, the leading Copenhagen newspaper. It is in recognized use, but perhaps more frequently in connection with the English original than with its Danish imitation.

An example of the second method is found in the term *Folkeuniversitet*, which occurs in the *Berlingske Tidende* for December 9th,

¹ Cf. the admirable discussion in Konrad Burdach's *Reinmar der Alte und Walther von der Vogelweide*, pp. 55 ff.

1898. At about the same time the word was used in a Danish weekly newspaper with the English word in parenthesis, showing that at that time the English word was more familiar in that meaning than its Danish equivalent. Although this word is inferior to the English form, it is certainly to be preferred to the ponderous *Folkeuniversitetsundervisning*, (People's University Instruction) which occurs in the *Berlingske* a month earlier, or to *Folkeuniversitetsforening*, (People's University Union) which is apparently the latest addition to the verbal collection. All three are misleading, as they imply a new kind of university, not an extension of the university system already in existence. Finally we may note *Bevægelse for Folkets Oplysning* (Movement for the Enlightenment of the People), but this term, one is almost tempted to say sentence, is a description rather than a name. It is too clumsy for any but German ears.

Finally the third method, that of literal translation, has been employed, for the first time, so far as was noted, by the Norwegian-American newspaper *Amerika*. The word is *Universitetsudvidelse*, and it seems to possess the three main conditions of naturalization; it is Danish, it is descriptive, and it corresponds exactly to the English word for which it stands. It is not at all improbable, however, that the present tendency to use English loan words in Danish to designate English ideas will give the final victory to University Extension.

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ELECTIVE COURSES.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES,

SIRS:—Is there any 'Englandish' phrase for 'Elective Courses,' an expression so familiar to American youth? To judge by the following passages in the London *Anthenæum* of Sept. 2, 1899, the term is strange to English ears:

"This interesting study in literary evolution is of American provenance, and first took shape as 'a series of lectures given in elective courses'—whatever those may be—in Yale College."

It is clear that American institutions should

be named by a Committee of Englishmen if we wish to prevent inter-Anglosaxonian misunderstandings.

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GRETCHEN'S CONSCIENCE.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES,

SIRS:—Although agreeing in the main with the spirit of Prof. Eggert's views in the April number of this journal, I feel that there are some points in his article that would need careful consideration before their acceptance as proof of the soundness of the argument that the *Böse Geist* in the Cathedral scene in Faust represents more than the voice of Gretchen's conscience. Without desiring to enter into a controversy, I wish to call attention to the matters that should be weighed.

After declaring himself in harmony with the opinion held by the great majority of Faust scholars, the defence of which was the purpose of my article in the January number, Prof. Eggert says:

"The question may, however, be raised: was it the poet's intention to represent only her conscience? It would seem that the *Böse Geist* is an impersonation in the same sense that the *Erdgeist* is. We must, therefore, attribute to him a certain character. As the equivalent of Gretchen's conscience the conception would be merely allegorical. But Goethe shuns allegories as frigid,—with him everything becomes concrete, plastic, tangible."

In the first place, the entire situation in the *Erdgeist* scene is radically different from that in the Cathedral scene, and consequently there can be no comparison between them. In the sense in which Professor Eggert looks at the matter, Mephistopheles too is allegorical, as embodying "all that is negative, sceptical, indifferent, and flippant in human nature." His argument on this point is about as follows:

'If the *Geist* means simply the voice of Gretchen's conscience, the conception is allegorical, but since Goethe shunned allegory, this can not be'.

That in itself is not a conclusive argument against such an interpretation, for Goethe did